

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, February 26. 1708.

THE Clamours a raving Party have for some Time filled our Heads with, about the Deficiency of Troops in the *Spanish* War, led me in my last to take Notice of that Affair; among the rest, I observ'd how eager our *High-Flyers* here fall in with any thing, that they think flies in the Face of the Government, and have bought up even to an Engrossing all the Papers of one Sort or another, that have but in the least descanted upon that Matter, in order to disperse them over the Countries, to propagate the Discontents of the abused People, and encrease publick Murmur at the Management of our Affairs.

Her Majesty, in Return to the Address of the House of Commons, and as is express'd in the Answer to the said Address,

to give all her Subjects Satisfaction, has given a direct and succinct Answer to this Matter, having caused every Part of it to be examin'd.

One of our Authors has been so civil to the QUEEN, as to tell her Majesty in Print, that he will not object against her Answer, till he sees, what the Parliament will say to it: I confess, I think her Majesty can do no less than thank him for so much good Usage—Ay, tho' he had most barbarously put his Censure before upon the Commons Addressing, without waiting for her Majesty's Answer.

This is one of the most remarkable Pieces of Behaviour from A Subject to his Sovereign, that I have met with a great while—That when the Parliament address'd her Majesty about the Deficiency in *Spain*, he fell upon

upon it directly, and pass'd his Censure most plentifully, before the QUEEN had given any Return to the Particulars; nay, tho' the Commons only address'd her Majesty to have an Account laid before them how it came to pass, and her Majesty promised to have it examin'd, and an Answer to be given—Yet he could not give his QUEEN a Day's Time, but fell upon it immediately. Now her Majesty has caused it to be examin'd, and has laid a full Answer before the House, in which her Majesty assures her Subjects that no Care has been wanting, &c. and that the Matter has not been fully stated to the House. And now this Gentleman will not pass his Censure, till he hears what the House of Commons will say; very Honourable to the QUEEN this is indeed. *Observer, N^o. . . .*

Well, well, says one now, is it not just to wait, till the Persons, that stated this to the House, have answer'd for themselves? Yes, yes most just; but was it not as just to have waited, till the QUEEN had examin'd the Matter, and till the Persons concern'd on that Side had answer'd for themselves too? — But the Case is plain, the Gentleman is afraid, if a wrong or a hasty Censure had been pass'd on the House of Commons Address, the House would resent it; but the Lenity of her Majesty is known, and presuming on that, he durst insult Her at Pleasure.

Well, to let that pass, let us come to the Fact as stated in her Majesty's Answer to the House; and tho' I shall not enter into the Enquiry here between the Officers employ'd, and from whom her Majesty has this Account, and the Persons who stated the Affair to the House, for that is none of my Business; I must enter a few Remarks by way of Caution against future passing our Censures in the Affair of this War in Spain.

First, You cannot but expect, that the Distance of that Service, the Variety of Accidents in the Transport Service, the different Nations, Agencies, Councils of State and War, and the like, must render that Exactness, which is requir'd in such Cases, impracticable; and it is not always that what we expect, can be comply'd with, or Times, Seasons, Numbers, &c. be observ'd, or made up to the Terms prescrib'd; but

Deficiencies in Quantity, and Deficiencies in Time must happen, in spite of the most exact Management in the World.

I'll enter into one Example to illustrate this, which is not only apposite to — but is really a Part of the Case in hand, and which, if we would give our selves Time and Patience to consider, would assist us in a calm Examination of such Affairs.

And this is the Expedition under the Command of the Earl Rivers, which as is now apparent by her Majesty's Answer, was design'd for the Spanish War, and the Regiments shipp'd on Board at that Time are reckon'd as Part of the Spanish Establishment. Two Things happened to this Expedition.

First, They were ship'd in July, 1706, and by the unavoidable and not to be foreseen Accidents of first almost 4 Months Voyage by contrary Winds and bad Weather; and secondly the Death of the King of Portugal, on which Occasion they did signal Services at Lisbon, too long to insert here, they could not arrive in Valencia till January 1707; had a thousand Sieges and Battles happened in this Time, you could not have prevented this —

Secondly, This was not all; but now let us come to the Numbers; we have her Majesty's Word, that at the Time, when these Regiments sailed from Torbay, they were by Draughts compleated to the Number of 8297 Men, and yet soon after their Arrival they were reduced to about 4500 Men.

This I bring not at all to examine the Deficiency, for that I am not now upon, but to prove what I advanc'd above, of the Contingency of this remote and difficult War, and to prepare us to meet with Disappointments in it with less Impatience.

From hence let us look back to the Expedition under Sir John Leake, for the Relief of Barcelona; and there you have a Complication of happy Junctures by the special Favour of Divine Providence for the Succour of that Place, and of which I have formerly spoken, that the Hand of Heaven might be taken Notice of by us, both to the Praise of his Goodness, and our Encouragement.

One

One Squadron from *Portsmouth*, One small one from *Plymouth*, One from *Ireland*, and One from *Lisbon*, having all of them Troops or other Assistance, failed to relieve *Barcelona*; and how came they there? By an unexpected and admirable Conduct of Heaven, they all met at *Gibraltar* and *Alicant* to a Tittle so exactly, and to such a Crisis of Time, that they came to *Barcelona*, when a few Days more had determin'd its Fate, and given up King *Charles* and his Claim to the *Spanish* Monarchy to the Hands of the *French* Invader—Well this happened indeed for the Confederacy—But did any Human Power appoint it, had they an Act of Parliament to secure their Arrival? Was it likely four Parties, from four several Quarters so remote, and each to be brought with different Winds, should meet so to a Day?—And what if they had not met, *Barcelona* had been lost, and the Miscarriage might have filled our Murmurs; but could human Skill prevent it, no Agents could have answer'd for the Disappointment.

The Sum of the Case therefore lies here; not really what Troops were actually in *Spain* at the Time of the Battle at *Almanza*, but whether all that could be done, or, as her Majesty's Words are, all that could be reasonably expected to be there *was done*, or *was there*, as to Time and Number; if this be to be answer'd, no doubt the Parliament will be satisfy'd also, for the House of Commons never do expect Impossibilities, tho' we do—And we have her Majesty's Word again—That this has been examin'd for her Majesty's Satisfaction, and that her Majesty is satisfy'd, no Care has been wanting.

I shall examine in my next, how far her Majesty's Satisfaction ought to be Ours—And how far we have Reason to believe, her Majesty is satisfy'd upon good Grounds, that our next Insult may not be upon her Royal Discretion, for we are apt to be very free with our Sovereign; of which hereafter.

MISCELLANEA

THE following Letter having been twice sent me, and some Importunity with it for its Publication, I could not deny the Author of it the Liberty of showing it to the World, tho' perhaps my Observations on it may not be so full as he expects.

S I R,

I Am inform'd, that the great Cry of Persecution in North-Britain, as used here to raise Money, is a Cheat; the Priest of our Parish hath been very industrious to beg Money on that Account, and hath been with me, but I do not find he hath any Letters-Patents from the QUEEN for such Collections: I think, it is agreed on all Hands, that the Persons pretending to be persecuted are such as disown the QUEEN and Government, and if so, it may be supposed, would dethrone her, were it in their Power. Now, suppose the Money

collected, under Pretence for their Relief, should be apply'd to buy Arms, and to raise an Insurrection in order to dethrone the QUEEN and subvert the Government; whether those, who pay, and those, who collect such Contributions, may not by our Laws be adjudg'd Guilty of High Treason for the same?

Your speedy Answer hereunto may be of Use to the Publick. The great Preparations of the French by Sea in these Parts look, as if they had some great Design in hand; I wish, these Contributions may not be made subservient thereunto; our Priest hath already collected, as he saith, Forty Pounds in our little Parish, but I do suspend giving him any thing on that Account, until I have your Answer to my Query; in the mean Time I rest yours.

February 18.

1707.